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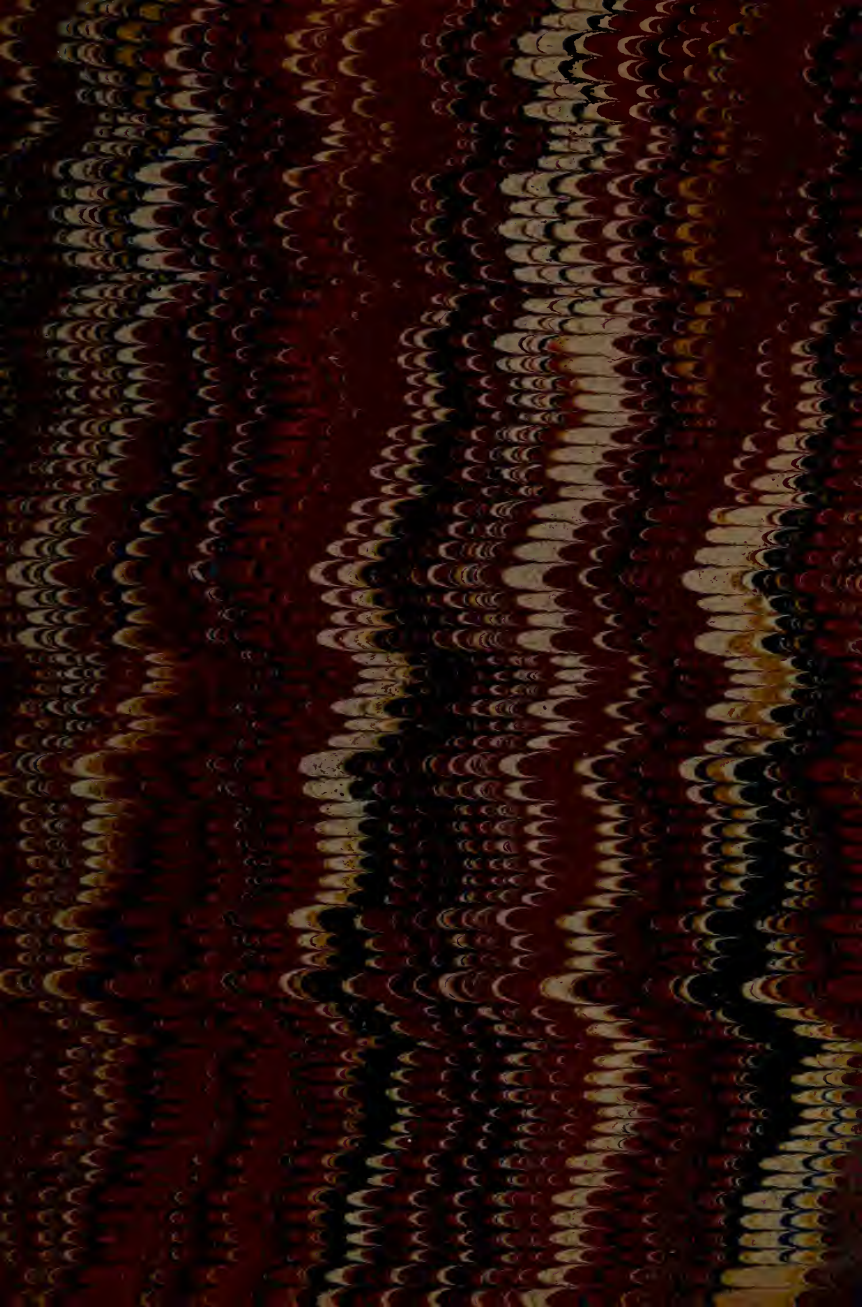
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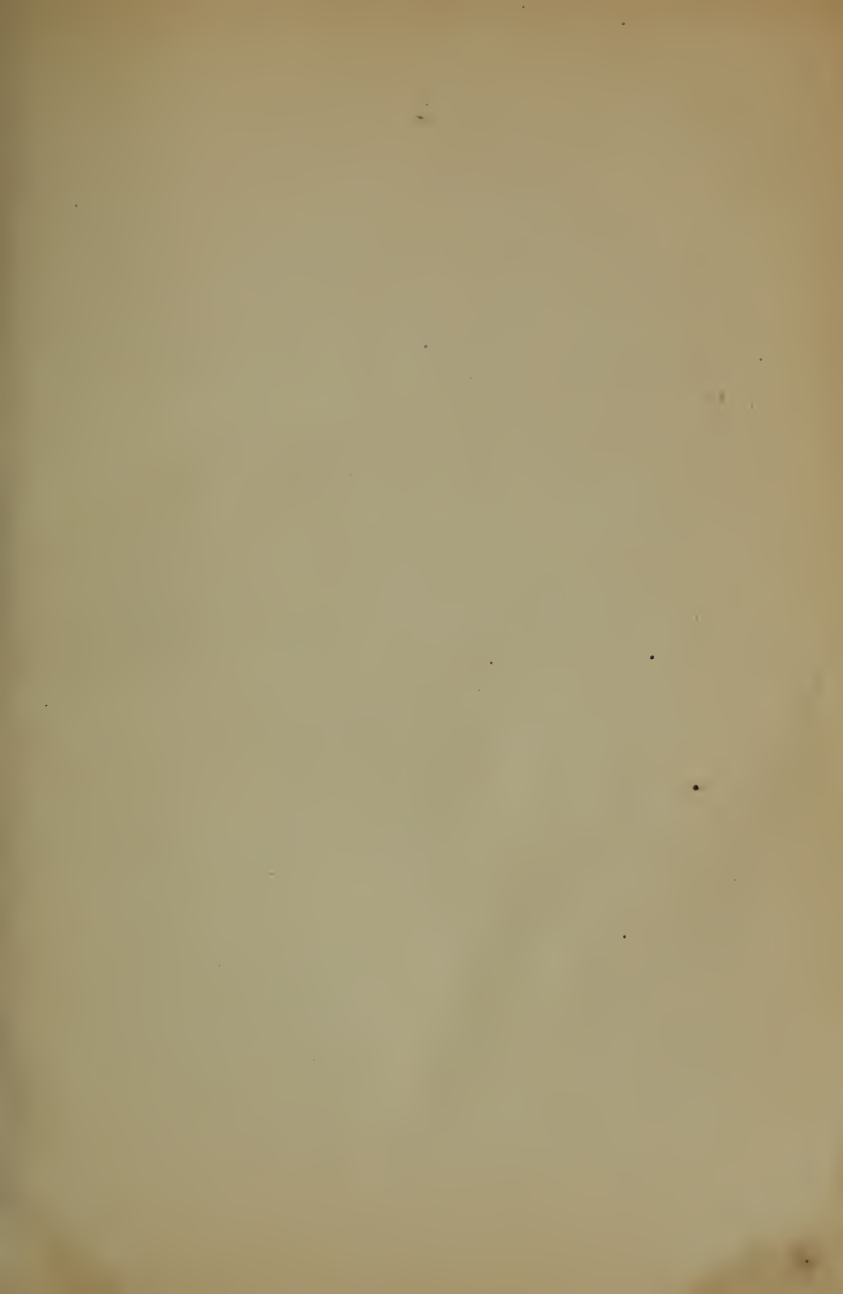
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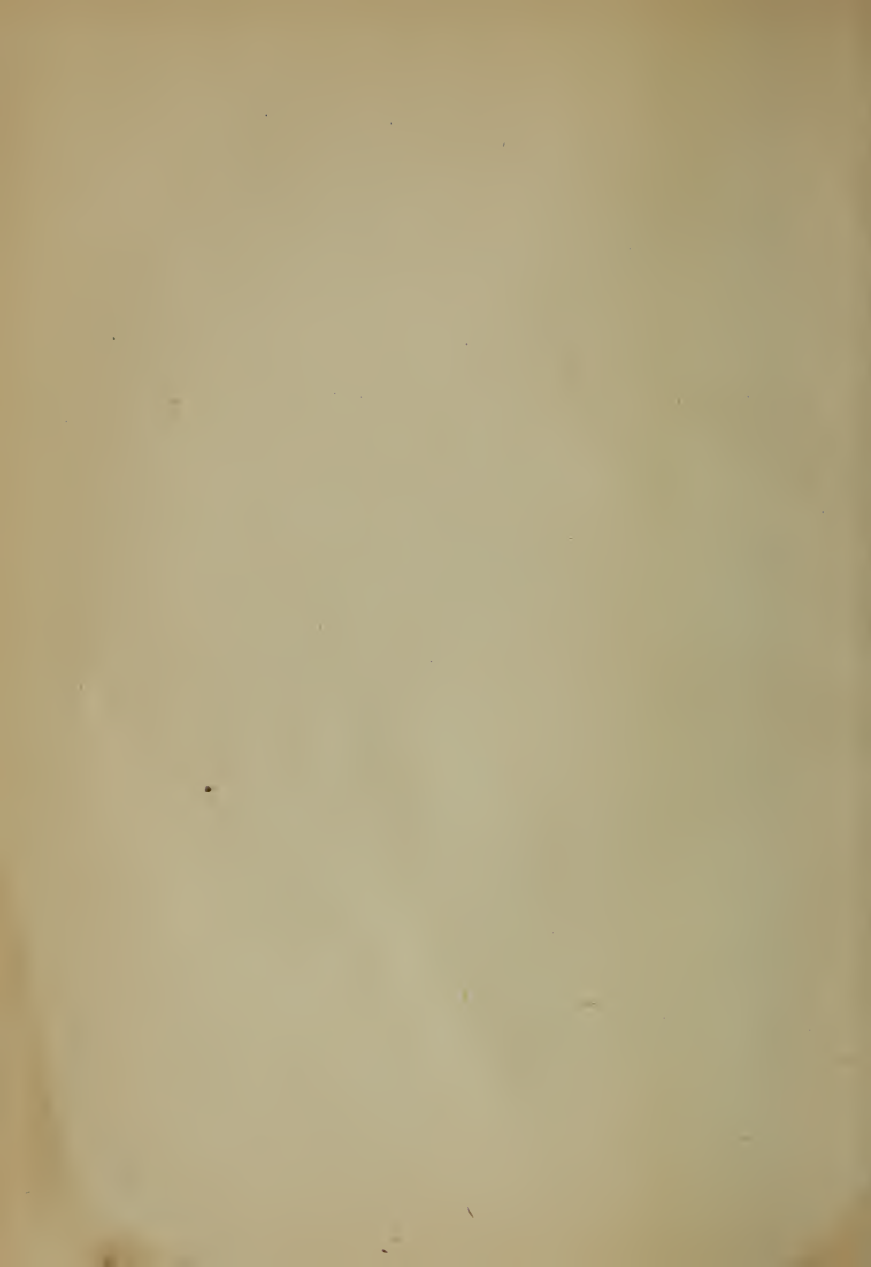
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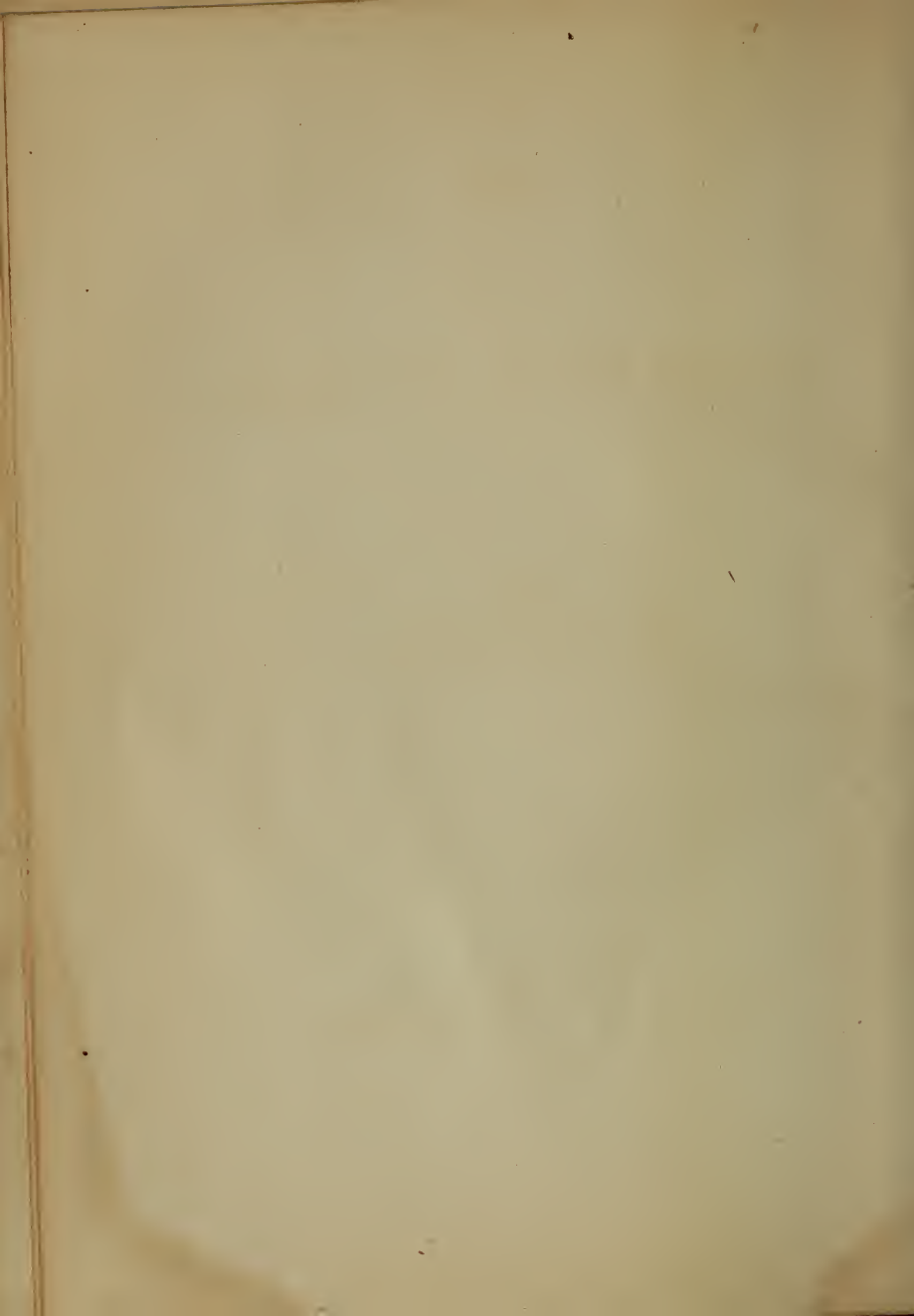














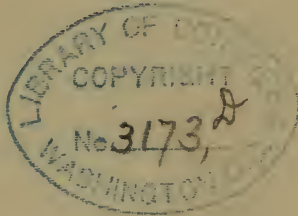
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THE

MILLENNIAL CHURCH.

BY

REV. J. J. MILLER.



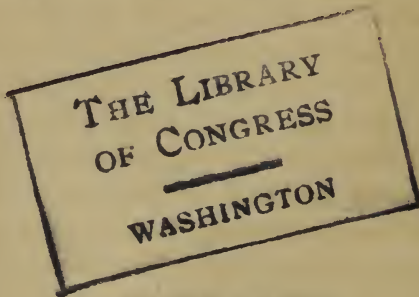
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THE  
MILLENNIAL CHURCH.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HOPE OF A BETTER FUTURE.

**A**MID the trial and conflict of the present, the church of Christ has always found comfort in the thought of the future. God has guarded the courses of this consolation, that its ministry should not fail. When the church, like Job, has been given over to the buffetings of Satan, and to the annoyance of professedly friendly criticism in the name of fair seeming but false philosophy, until all the earthly prospect has darkened, there has been a Divine prohibition which these oppressions could not pass. The hope of the future has lingered even over the desolation of Zion; and from out the darkest night which has settled over the pathway

of God's elect, have risen the words of Job's triumphant testimony, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." Powers of the world to come have been laying hold upon regenerate souls with an unrest which has not conflicted with Christian contentment, with a homesickness for the sight of the unseen which has not interfered with readiness for service or with acquiescence in the Divine will. The idea of a coming age, brighter and better than any which have preceded it, wherein the church shall have risen out of its lowly condition, and wherein the world itself will partake of the new gifts, and receive another and deeper benediction, has found ready admission to the hearts of the people of God. It were not strange if a close examination of these hearts should reveal, not only a readiness to receive, but some degree of power to create, this idea. Such a discovery would not disprove its Biblical origin. It would show that God's work in the regeneration of souls carries with it a prophecy of the new creation, or, in other words, that the gift of the new life to individuals is accompanied by the power of a new insight or foresight of the Divine plans.

## SCRIPTURAL ORIGIN OF THE IDEA.

If at any time it has seemed that this idea, or the more common and abiding images in which the idea has been set forth, were only the creation of imaginations excited by new and strange inward experiences, or that they were the reactionary product of the cross-bearing life which has thus far fallen to the lot of the church, there has been needed only the slightest reference to the book of the Christian revelation to show that both the idea and its images are eminently Scriptural. Prophets of the former dispensation felt the quickening impulse of this truth as it disclosed itself in their visions. The instruments with which they were sent forth among their people to lay bare national evils and individual sins were sometimes laid aside, and burdens of rebuke and denunciation were exchanged for milder words of encouragement, and revelations of better things. Their messages presented a series of remarkable contrasts and rapid transitions. From the gloom of impending wrath, they were wont to pass, not as by the slow approach of morning through the

gray of the dawn, but from the middle watch of starless night, to the midday splendor of an unearthly day. These transitions themselves, as well as the scenes in which they appear, were superhuman. The royal mark was upon them. Those who were the channels of these communications gave themselves up to the influence which they knew was Divine. Many who heard the words were convinced, many were awe-stricken; devout souls caught the inspiration, and made their pilgrimage with a firmer step in the anticipation of that which, though it might be distant, was yet near to their hearts.

#### ITS PLACE IN THE FAITH OF THE EARLY CHURCH.

The church of the early days, called upon to enter peculiarly into the sufferings of Christ, and to embrace his cross which seems ever to retain its power of wounding, as well as its mightier power of healing, turned with delight to those prophecies which foretold the coming of that day when the offense of the cross should cease. The Christian slave saw new meaning in the year of Jubilee; the diseased saw a land wherein "the in-

habitant shall not say I am sick." Martyrs forgot the pains which their tormentors inflicted, and displayed, not only the heroism of faith, but a mastery of the Spirit over the flesh which was the result, not so much of an assurance of personal reward, as of their approach to something far exceeding any personal enjoyment, the glory of which they saw in vision.

#### A LOSS IN LATER TIMES.

The church in later days has not been without this consolation; yet as differences in respect to doctrines have sprung up, and divisions have taken place, with the losses which have followed the neglect or rejection of portions of the truth, the question very properly arises, whether there has not been a loss in respect to this truth; whether, while Christians of all the sects into which the church has been divided have been animated by the views they have held concerning that which is beyond, there has not been a loss in unity and definiteness; whether it is true that a certain loftiness of spirit, which characterized the early Christians in their expectation of a speedy con-

summation of the plans of God in a wonderful and soul-entrancing glory, is not lacking in those of later times, who are looking more for a personal deliverance from the evils of this life, by a peaceful death, and for admission at length into a quiet place of rest in a far-off heaven ; in other words, whether the hope of the individual has not taken the place of the hope of the church.

#### A CHANGE IN PHRASEOLOGY.

It will hardly be disputed that the language in which these subjects are now spoken of by many differs from that which was in common use in the apostolic times, or that this change in phraseology has been the result of a similar change in the interpretation of the prophetic Scriptures. It will not be necessary to give a formal statement of the views upon these subjects which are more commonly held by American Christians, nor will it be needful at this point to give any explanation of the title of this book. It is assumed that the association of the two words *millennial* and *church* at once largely relieves the latter from the burden of those questions which divide the great body of



Christians at the present time ; that all discussions about the foundation, order, and ordinances of the church will have been settled when the millennium shall have fully come.

## THE DOCTRINE STATED.

1. *The millennial church will be the glorified church.*

It is intended to show under this statement that the millennium does not belong to this dispensation, or form the concluding portion of this age ; that the church will not enter the millennial state simply and alone through the continuance of the present operations of grace ; that it will not enter that state in the flesh, nor yet directly through death, but through the resurrection of the dead in Christ and the translation and transformation of the living saints at the second coming of Christ. Three passages are here noticed as furnishing a part of the Scriptural basis for this statement.

1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, — “For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then

we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Cor. xv. 52, — "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump, for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." It will be conceded that the result of the later criticism upon the text of these two passages sustains the rendering of the English version as substantially correct. The first clause of the passage from Thessalonians teaches most clearly the doctrine that the Lord Jesus will again return to this earth, a literal personal appearing; in emphatic distinction from other things, which are by some put in the place of such a return. If there is any truth in the expression that the Lord comes when a man dies, that is not the coming which is here declared.

#### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST LITERAL.

That coming of the Lord which takes place when a soul is converted is not here spoken of, nor will any fulfillment of the promise made by Christ of his spiritual presence with his people,

answer the requirements of this passage. If there is any language with which the literal second coming of Christ can be expressed so as to afford no reasonable ground for denial or misunderstanding or wrong appropriation, such language is used by the Apostle in these words, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven," taken in their connection. If these words are to be understood as referring to some future display of grace more marked than has been before, some more wonderful spiritual revelation of God to his people, then it ought also to be believed that the dead in Christ are not those saints who have passed the literal death, but rather persons who are spiritually dead; and the term, "we which are alive," must mean those who are spiritually living, in which case the spiritually dead and the spiritually alive are to be caught up together into some high spiritual or airy state, and in which movement those who are alive will have no precedence over those who are spiritually dead.

But this is not the worst of such an interpretation; consistency requires that the death and resurrection of Christ mentioned in the verse next

but one preceding this should also be understood as a spiritual death and resurrection. It is submitted that such a use of Scripture is a perversion of that which has been given to men for their instruction unto another use which can indoctrinate men in nothing because it can present no stable grounds for the establishment of faith. It would not have been thought necessary to enter thus upon a defense of a literal interpretation of this passage which is doubtless admitted by most Christians, were it not for the fact that there are those who stand as teachers and interpreters of the Scriptures who do not hesitate to speak of some future manifestation of the Holy Spirit more powerful and extensive than any which has yet been known, as constituting the hope of the church, and as the fulfillment of those prophecies which foretell the Lord's return.

#### THE COMING OF DEPARTED SAINTS WITH CHRIST.

The scene revealed in these passages opens at the time when this age is closing. A remaining body of believers, a rear-guard of the church, is still on the earth. The bodies of the righteous

dead yet sleep where they fell. The dwellers on the earth are engaged in the various pursuits of earthly life. Suddenly the heavenly places are astir with a new movement. The hour is come for which the spirits of the righteous dead have waited. Summoned by a call which pervades all ranks of the heavenly company, they with attendant hosts of angels have gathered about the person of Christ and with Him have descended into the region of earth. They are come close to the scene of their old strife, but not into contact with it. They do not seek amid the dead for those bodies which saw corruption. The mystery of their long patience is about to end. They are clothed upon with their new bodies incorruptible, glorious, having whatever relation to those which went to dust the Divine power is pleased to give them, yet being such that they are at once new and resurrection bodies.

#### THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

Simultaneously with this scene, or following an order which is more of rank than of time, the faithful, who have borne up against the rising tide

of earthly sorrow and of earthly sin, are caught up from their pilgrimage. The scenes of Tabor and of Olivet are repeated, only it is now the mystic body of Christ which is transfigured; only it is now the church which makes the ascension, charioted upon clouds, and borne away to the appointed meeting-place with the returning King. The other of these three passages is Rev. xx. 4, 7, — “ And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them; and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands, and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection.”

#### THE DESCRIPTION DRAMATIC.

The place where this scene transpires is not definitely stated.

In the first verse of this chapter, an angel is

seen who has descended out of heaven, whose mission is the binding and imprisonment of Satan; verses seven to ten present the loosing of Satan, and his last great act of deception among the nations of the earth: but this passage opens with the abrupt announcement, "I saw thrones and they sat upon them." The subject of the verb translated *sat* is not expressed, nor do the verses immediately preceding furnish the subject; while it is evident that the opening verses of the chapter are closely related to this passage, yet the scene here described stands by itself, distinct both from what precedes and from what follows. If the passage were transposed, and its opening clauses were inserted toward the end of the fourth verse, the subject would be at once apparent. Such a transposition, mentally made, is doubtless intended. The whole scene is dramatic—the Revelator speaks as he sees. A vision of thrones comes before him. They are not unoccupied. He sees both the thrones and those who are seated upon them, at the same moment.

## WHO HAVE PART IN THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

It is not yet made known to him what the vision is or who they are whom he sees; as he looks, the vision changes, new elements are added by which the needed explanation is given, and the before nameless occupants of the thrones are introduced to his knowledge. These are the souls of those beheaded for the testimony of Jesus and for the word of God, and whoever did not worship the beast, neither his image, and did not receive the mark upon the forehead or upon their hand. The persons here mentioned are often spoken of as though constituting but a single class, namely, the martyr dead. But if such were the case, why these clauses following the first? Are they merely descriptive of the virtues of the martyrs? Such a description would hardly be needed. It would not be needful to say of those who had died for the testimony of Jesus, that they had not worshipped the beast; the manner of their death was an all-sufficient witness to that fact.

It is evident that more than one class of per-



sons is here mentioned. A comparison of the terms, beast and his image, here used, with like terms in the thirteenth chapter, is sufficient to identify them as describing the same great powers of evil. It is there said that power was given unto the beast to make war with the saints and also over every tribe and tongue and nation, and the startling fact is added, that all the dwellers on the earth would worship the beast, except those whose names were written in the Lamb's book of life. Here the classes mentioned under these titles widen out to embrace the whole of the ungodly or anti-christian portion of the world, hence it follows that the classes enumerated in this passage as the martyrs for Jesus, and as not having worshipped the beast nor his image, nor having his mark, embrace all those who had died in the Lord. This passage, thus interpreted, presents the martyred dead first mentioned in honorable distinction, then the rest of the godly who had withstood the trials of earth and who had died in the faith. These, says the inspired observer, lived. Not the mere fact of existence, not the deeper fact of spiritual life, is here meant, but the resurrection

or completed life. He stands beholding the scene which Paul describes in the previous passage, at that point where the descending saints reach the vicinity of earth. His eye sweeps along the lines of that vast assembly of the blessed, just at the moment when they are clothed upon with their immortal bodies, at the moment when they know for the first time the rapture and glow of complete and glorified human life and are entering upon their millennial reign. Beneath the range of this rapt vision, lies the guilty world with its wide field of death, whereon he sees the graves of the wicked dead undisturbed, their bodies left to their unhallowed sleep till the thousand years are ended. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection! On such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years. These following words add force to the interpretation given; for, by natural inference, those not then raised are those who await the power of the second death, and the attributing to these saints of the priestly and kingly offices only places them in the posi-

tion which is the common heritage of the faithful church, for in the ascription of praise with which the book of Revelation opens, the Apostle, in the name of the churches, or rather of the whole church says, "Unto Him who has washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever!" These passages show that the return of the Lord will take place at the beginning of the millennial season. That the millennium will be under another dispensation, at the beginning of which the church will be withdrawn from its earthly conflict and introduced into its glorified state.

#### CHRIST'S PRAYER FOR GLORY.

In the prayer of Christ on the last night of his earthly ministry, He asks the Father for the gift of glory. There may be a graduated use of the term; He may have asked for a measure of the gift such as would consist with the Divine plan, such as would comport with his condition, and might rest upon Him in the last great act of his life and in the moment of his death. There

is such a use of the word when He says, "I am glorified in them," namely, the disciples, and "I have glorified thee"—the Father—on the earth. But this prayer has a wider range. It reaches through and beyond any glory which might be granted Him in those last hours of his life, and reveals its full import in the added words, "with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

#### THE REASON FOR THE PRAYER.

The meaning of this prayer is not grasped by those who see in it only the cry of the sad and weary Son of man, worn by the labor of the past years, and oppressed by the sense of the greater burden which was being laid upon Him; who discern only the cry for deliverance and rest. It was rather the outburst of his royal nature, which was appropriate to that hour when He could say, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." Now when the years of the hidings of his power and of the repression of his nature were ending, these words, so tremulous with the spirit of that world which was bending over Him,

break from his lips as a testimony to that which was in Him and to that which belonged to Him. Glory is an essential of Christ's state; the emptying was extraordinary, the desire to return to that which had been was natural. In a sense it may be said the prayer of Christ was not necessary, because glory would have gathered itself to Christ as the halo gathers about the sun, as soon as the scene of earth had closed.

#### THE PRESENT STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS DEAD.

That which is thus an attribute of Christ belongs in degree to his people, because they are made for it. The prayer of Christ was a type of the prayer of the church. An unutterable yearning for glory belongs, not as a weakness or a sin or a defect to be removed, but as a right and natural quality to the renewed soul. The saint life is not complete until it is glorified. Departed saints are spoken of as gone to glory, yet this can be true of the present actual state of these saints only in a restricted sense, that they are gone from earth to a blessed abiding with Christ. That they are conscious and happy is shown in

words which give utterance to the desire of an apostle to be absent from the body in order that he might be present with the Lord, a state which upon personal grounds he regarded as far better than his then present state. In the faith which supports dying saints there is victory ; they enter into rest and their sleep is sweet ; but these ascending spirits cannot enter immediately upon that glory which is the hope of the church. The time for that state to begin, as clearly fixed by Scripture, the manner of its introduction, and the condition of the saints, all forbid such a thought. Death is not the door — Jesus and the Resurrection are the words which hold in their embrace the hope of the church and are the words which are written over the gates of glory — until the resurrection the saints who have died are not complete, an essential of their humanity is wanting. God surely does not glorify men while as yet they are lacking a part of that which constitutes their complete nature. The glorifying of the saints follows the completion of all inwardly renewing or sanctifying work, and includes the exaltation of the purified to the outward positions and gifts for

which their inward gifts and life shall have fitted them. The mutual adaptation of all related things to each other is so manifestly a rule of the Divine action as to furnish a ground of belief, amounting almost or quite to a certainty, that the glory which will be given to souls will be the exact expression of their inward nature and character. The resurrection, in its order and in the quality or extent of its gifts, will be a visible declaration of the character and consequent rank of every member of Christ's body.





## CHAPTER II.

### OPPOSING VIEWS.

It seems fit that at this point reference be made to the views of those who regard the millennium as belonging to this dispensation, who are looking forward to the days when the church, now dispersed and divided, weakened by ancient animosities and threatened by fresh dissensions, shall grow wiser, forsake its internal warfare, and unite its strength against the common foe; and when the forces of evil, unable to withstand such union, shall be subdued and come to the acknowledgment of the truth. Or else that these still divided hosts of God, each guided by an unseen but overruling Providence, shall address itself to its own portion of the work; that the zeal of one body of Christians shall stimulate the zeal of other bodies; and these, all acting with such concert as may be secured, shall press on the



work of evangelization in all directions until they shall circle and overspread the earth, coming together at last, as different parties ascending a mountain from opposite sides meet at the top, and are then filled with a common joy at the great success; errors melted away in the increasing light, differences cast aside, the long-looked-for unity of the faith in the bond of peace reached, the church of Christ shall stand forth in power and beauty, embracing a converted world, and from that proud position shall send up to heaven the tidings that its work is done and that it is now ready to receive its Lord.

#### THE SUPPOSED PROOF FROM OLD TESTAMENT.

There are some portions of Scripture, especially prophecies of the Old Testament, which are supposed to furnish grounds for this view. They are such as these. Isaiah ii., In the last days the mountain of the Lord's house is to be established in the top of the mountains and all nations are to flow unto it. Idols are to be utterly abolished, men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, na-

tion shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. Psalm lxxii., He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Isaiah ix., Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Isaiah xi., The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Isaiah lii., The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.

#### THE MEANING OF THESE PASSAGES.

That these and many like passages in the prophets are intended to set forth the triumph of the kingdom of God and a condition of things unlike that which now exists on the earth and far more blessed, does not admit of doubt. Any view of future events which finds these visions of brightness inconsistent with its own outline, or which for the sake of preserving its own integrity feels the necessity of passing by these Scriptures, can have no integrity that is worth preserving. The question is not, whether these are prophecies

which must have fulfillment, but rather as to the time and manner of their fulfillment; not whether they connect with Christ and his kingdom, but what the relation is which they sustain to that kingdom. The most obvious teaching of these Scriptures is not that the Christian church will advance and take possession of the redeemed and beautified world in this dispensation. Indeed, the language does not favor the idea that the church will directly furnish the visible actors in these scenes; yet were it to be understood that the church finds the path of its future through these scenes, the beauty and blessedness here described do not appear as the immediate and direct results of that form of service which the church is called to render. When it is attempted to trace the progress of these operations, which began with the commencement of this era, through the centuries that have passed and on possibly along the course of coming centuries, far exceeding in number, as some suppose, those that have already passed, and to show a varying, yet, on the whole, steady growth of the fruits of the Spirit in the soil of this earth, and to picture the ripened harvest of this effort

bounded and outlined by these prophecies, there is a want of agreement; the words of the prophet refuse to fill the places thus assigned to them.

#### THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GOSPEL DISPENSATION.

There are certain well-defined characteristics of the work to which the church is commissioned — there is, if the expression is allowable, a style in which the Holy Spirit carries on his present work, a manner in which the church unites with the Spirit, and a way in which the church advances.

It is ordained that the Gospel be preached to men everywhere, whether they hear or forbear. Every conversion is a quiet taking from the forces of this world and an adding to the forces of God. This is the way and the only way in which the church is authorized to work. Wherever it has departed from this method, the power and mark of God have departed; wherever any body claiming to be the church has sought to advance its interests by the use of other means, God has put the stamp of his displeasure upon the movement.

## DIFFERING CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE PROPHECIES.

But these prophecies do not shape themselves in accordance with these gentle movements of grace. They have another style — characteristics as marked but differing. Instead of the quiet advance of the church, patient, suffering, until at length it comes to the place of gladness, coming in as a band of harvesters come from the field with peaceful songs, — there is a sound of war. In the time when the idols shall be cast to the moles and bats, the men who worshipped them are not represented as bowing in submission at the altars of Christian service, but as fleeing into the holes of the rocks and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord and for the glory of his majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Men beat their swords into ploughshares, not because in quiet congregations they have become convinced of the unrighteousness of war, but as a result of the Lord's appearance among the nations to judge and to rebuke. The time when the mountains shall bring peace to the people,

and when He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and when his dominion shall be from sea to sea, comes when He shall break in pieces the oppressor and when his enemies shall lick the dust. He whose arm brought salvation will repay fury to his adversaries. He that cometh from Edom with dyed garments from Bozrah is not Christ in his humiliation and wet with the blood of Calvary' but the King, glorious in his apparel, and his garments red from treading the wine-press of the wrath of God, and the day of vengeance introduces the year of his redeemed. A new arm of Divine service is introduced, the heavens appear full of the hastening wonders of a new movement. Earth wakes again to the tread of the Almighty moving in the terribleness of his power. New scenes — a change in means and in operation, rapidity of action, suddenness of stroke — the bursting forth of judgments appropriate to follow the long abuse of the Gospel and of the testimony of the faithful church, — these are the characteristic marks of the operations of God in the days of these prophecies, and it is by these that God will open the way to the

particular forms of beauty and blessedness which these visions of the prophets describe.

THE RELATION WHICH THE COMING SEASON OF  
EARTHLY BLESSEDNESS HAS TO THE CHURCH.

That the church has an interest in these new endowments of earth is manifest; but these do not appear as new lines of beauty, lineaments of grace developed in the form and overspreading the features of the bride of Christ, but rather as a bridal gift, presented to her who is already perfect and glorious in every part; they appear not as possessions into which the church has grown by a long process of spiritual absorption and accretion in the present order of things, but rather as a new display of the Divine grace and power which have been hidden from sight, curtained behind the progressively developed plans of God, from which at the appointed time the veil is lifted, and which the church is led forth to look upon as among the things prepared for her by the Lord.

## THE TIME OF FULFILLMENT.

These prophecies do not promise fulfillment before, but after, the second coming of Christ. Daniel (Dan. vii.) declares that the power of the kingdoms of this world continues until the Ancient of days comes; then it is that judgment is given to the saints, and the saints possess the kingdom — and, in the vision of Zechariah, “The time when the Lord shall be King over all the earth is preceded, not by the first coming of the Lord only, but by the great gathering of the nations to battle, and by that appearance of the Lord wherein his feet stand upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the Mount of Olives cleaves asunder toward the east and toward the west, half the mountain removing toward the north and half of it toward the south, leaving a very great valley.” Hence these Scriptures, which are regarded by some as proof that the millenium will form the bright conclusion of this present age, are really evidences against such a view.



## ARGUMENTS FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Following these, another class of passages, found chiefly in the New Testament, claim attention. If the world were to be wholly or largely converted in these days; if the power of the Spirit was to be so greatly increased in the church as to bring into vital union with God all those who now have only a nominal relation to it; if the church, under the inspiration of the Spirit, flaming with fiery zeal, was to reach such a condition of influence and power, that all those communities and states which are Christian in name, unable to withstand the fervor of churchly words and deeds, should yield to regenerating grace; and if the missionary organizations, now doing noble work under many limitations, were to have their defects purged away, their hinderances removed, and with plans perfected, and wants in men and money abundantly supplied, and above all, made increasingly efficient by the grace of God, were to go forth to their great work, in the assurance of bringing all the heathen nations to the obedience of the faith, the line of such an advance of the

church must be radiant with glory. If, for a season, the sight of this glory is obscured, the obscuration must reach its end, and the brilliancy of these movements flash upon the vision of the earnest student of God's word. But no such Bible vision of the earthly journey of the church of Christ rewards the student's search.

THE EARTHLY LOT OF THE CHURCH ONE OF  
TRIAL TILL THE END.

A mission noble in its nature, grand in its object, and blessed in its results, is the God-given mission of the church on earth. The world has nothing to compare with it. The Spirit of the living God walketh amid candlesticks, whose shining is with a light from heaven. A spirit of self-sacrifice and a moral heroism has been displayed along the track of the church, over which angels have rejoiced. The people which sat in darkness have seen great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light has sprung up, a multitude of souls have been saved, whose coming to the great assembly shall be from the east, from the west, from the north, and from

the south ; but both the past history of the church and the prophecy of its future present to view a course rugged in its smoothest places, lying through wildernesses and across desert wastes even to the time of the end. The experience of the Master is the experience of his faithful servants. A partnership in his temptation; a sympathy with his sorrow, a continuance of his conflict, a filling-up of that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, has been, and is, the lot of the church on earth. The commission is to preach the gospel in all the world for a witness unto all nations, but not with the promise that the message shall everywhere be welcomed.

#### THE STATE OF THE WORLD THROUGHOUT THIS AGE.

The tenor of the inspired testimony is that the path of the church lies through the midst of wars and rumors of wars, nation rising against nation, amid famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, through persecutions of the world, offences and betrayal of false brethren, iniquity abounding, and the love of many waxing cold. "This know, that in the

last days perilous times shall come, for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof." (Tim. iii.) "And evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." (Matt. xxiv.) "But as the days of Noah, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." (2 Peter iii.) "There shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts and saying, where is the promise of his coming?" Nor is it the testimony of the Scriptures that the anti-Christian kingdoms shall be overturned during this age, and previous to the Lord's return. The book of Daniel, in whatever way its revelations are interpreted, seems incapable of any fair interpretation which does not leave the truth standing out with clearness that the maneuvering of hostile forces continues to the end.

## THE PRESENT DEVELOPMENT OF THE RACE.

The condition of the nominal church in the last days is far from that which the theory of increasing strength and beauty and a converted world would demand. Foolish and graceless professors will still be in the company of those who are wise unto eternal life. The views of certain persons are influenced by their contemplation of the increasing power of the human race, the wonderful development of mind, the enlargement of the scope of human investigations in science, the subjection of matter and the control of forces. Inventions which have brought the once distant nations into the relation of neighbors, discoveries and systems of education which are furnishing the common people with stores of information formerly unknown even to scholars, — these, it is judged, are preparing the way for a knowledge of social relations and of the laws of national life and international comity that must soon extend itself in beneficent reign over all the nations of the earth. But God reminds men that the spreading of a worldly civilization is not one with the

extension of his kingdom ; that increase of knowledge and of power in an ungodly world bears along with it the enlargement and intensifying of wickedness.

#### THE MAN OF SIN.

He teaches that inventions will continue to be made ; men shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased, yet iniquity shall abound, and after all the boasted progress of the race and its emergence from the darkness of the past, in the time when the ripened fruit of the world's long season of culture ought to appear, and in the very time when, according to the view of some, the increasing power and glory of the church ought to be overspreading the earth and celebrating its last and crowning victory over sin and evil ; at that time, close down to the end of this age, there appears by the truer delineations of the prophetic word a more dreadful form than any which have preceded it, a gathering of the forces of evil, a drawing together into a strange unity of those elements which, though opposed to God, have been unable to maintain fellowship among them-

selves, a fiercer glowing of the passion fires in ungodly souls, a rising tide of the world's depravity, out of which as by a birth-pang of hell shall spring a giant form of wickedness, more malignant and heaven-defying than the mind of man has yet conceived; a being, human in form, but diabolical in nature, rearing himself in the midst of the world's civilization and drawing about himself multitudes of men in a besotting service and a blasphemous worship, all the more strange and wicked because following on the long-taught lessons of a world's decayed idolatry. It is with the form of such a wickedness in the person of the man of sin, like a black and hideous object, projected on the background of the picture of this age — that the scene draws toward its close.

#### THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF THE CHURCH TOWARD HER ABSENT LORD.

Another evidence of the mistake of those who look for scenes of millennial glory in this present age appears in the Scriptural attitude of the church toward her absent Lord. The church wears his name; He is its head; He is the absent bridegroom.

The sacrificial work of Christ is not His only work. All the experiences of grace which follow the footsteps of regenerate souls are intended to strengthen the bond that bound them in the hour of their birth. It is not distinctively the church of the Holy Spirit, but the church of Christ. The Spirit is the guide and sanctifier of the church. He acts for Christ. He speaks not of Himself, but takes of the things of Christ and reveals them to believers. This involves no question of the deity of the Spirit, but is simply the way in which God is pleased to reveal Himself. It is the order of the Divine relationship to the church. The presence of the Holy Spirit, therefore, in the church, does not change its relation to Christ to make Him any less its head, or to make proper any other position or attitude of the body than that of expectation and looking for until He appears. His return to His people is the event which they are directed to keep before them constantly ; not the death of individual members of the body, but the return of the Lord to the body itself. It is this that is urged as a motive to personal fidelity, as the posture which is becoming



and safe, not to preserve which is so contrary to the spirit of the Christian profession as to throw doubt upon the character of those who are forgetful. It is this event which is to signalize to the church the hour of its deliverance from trial and conflict. It embodies the Christian hope, is a source of joy amid sorrow — of comfort in affliction — of patience in the long night watches of the waiting.

#### THE RETURN OF THE LORD IMMINENT.

The return of the Lord is set forth in the New Testament as imminent. Watch is the one word which expresses the duty of the church in this respect; not cease to watch because the subject seems involved and men cannot tell just when the Lord will come, but watch for the very reason that men know not the hour. If it were true of some among the early Christians, that they came to hold extravagant notions respecting this truth, it is even more certain that the inspired writers who sought to correct such notions did not do this by casting reproach upon the doctrine itself of the Lord's return, nor by denying the fact of the imminence of that event. To be in readiness, to wait

for the Lord from heaven, to be established in holiness at his coming, to comfort one another with the words which describe his advent, to know that He will come suddenly as a thief in the night to those who are ungodly, to be preserved blameless unto his coming, not to be troubled by the false notion that the day of the Lord was at hand — that is, already present; to wait patiently for and love his appearing, that the apparent delay did not invalidate the promise, that the time was short, the night far spent, and though a thousand years were with Him as one day, yet would He come quickly, — were the forms of expression put into the mouths of the early disciples by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Whoever accepts the inspiration ought to accept the correctness of these words, and of the hope which was built upon them.

#### A DIFFICULTY WITH THE SPIRITUALIZING THEORY.

The lengthened delay now covering eighteen centuries takes nothing from the fact of the imminence of this great event. It was God's will

that the day should tarry, and that its place in the years should be unknown to men, and yet that it should be looked for as constantly impending.

But while such delay does not properly change in the least the attitude of the church, the intervention of any definitely stated long season would necessarily effect a change. If there is Scriptural ground for the belief that the present operations of grace are to go on acting upon the world until this triumphant progress of the truth results in the world-wide blessedness of the millennium, which period must itself be what the term indicates, a thousand years, or else that the term is used for an indefinitely long period, such as shows the world to be yet in its infancy and this age to be only fairly begun, and if the second coming of Christ will not occur until the close of this long period, then the idea of the imminence of that event falls and with it the force of these warning and comforting words. From such considerations it is affirmed that the church of Christ cannot reach its millennial state until the second coming of Christ, and that it will pass to that glory through the resurrection of the righteous dead and the translation of the then living saints.



### CHAPTER III.

#### THE MILLENNIAL CHURCH WILL BE THE WEDDED OR CONSORT CHURCH.

THE saints in the glorified state will appear as individuals, each rewarded according to the record of earthly life, yet individuality will blend in a new personality in the transaction of that hour. That which shall for the time withdraw the gaze of the universe from even the most eminent saints will be the oneness of the church, beautiful in its members, but transcendently glorified in the unity of the many in one body. The church of Christ has been constituted a distinct and peculiar company, and the highest designation of her rank is that which is given when she is announced as the bride of Christ.

Of the scene itself in which this relation is to be consummated there is no description; not even the visions of the apostle of the Revelation appear

to have penetrated so far as this banquet hall of the heavenly places ; yet in the allusions scattered through the New Testament there are given certain features or qualities of the relation itself. These allusions are such as point to something more than that measure of joy which will be filled when the saints find themselves in the presence of Christ and in the possession of the personal graces of redemption.

THE EXALTED AND PECULIAR NATURE OF  
THE RELATIONSHIP.

The inspired selection of the terms Bridegroom and Bride, as applied to Christ and his church, does not exhaust its purpose when it has conveyed to the mind the idea of intimate, tender, and abiding spiritual relationship. The saints will be sinless, but more than sinlessness is here required. Adam had that quality in his first estate, yet the scenes of that earthly paradise present no such relation as this. Spirituality must be a quality of the wedded church, but more than this is required ; angels have a perfection of spiritual life, but the angels attendant at the marriage supper

will not wear the garments of the Bride ; more than these qualities, more than immortality, more than salvation are demanded and must be possessed by the church when she is led forth to meet the Bridegroom. There must be the completion of an endowment of grace which has been going on for ages, and the highest result of which will be a likeness to Christ in and through the mystery of his incarnation.

#### THE IDEAL MANHOOD.

What the Divine ideal of manhood is, is known not by anything that the human race has yet produced, is known only as Christ is known, and as Christ in his glory is yet veiled from earthly sight, the ideal man is yet hidden behind the same veil. The best conceptions are no better, no nearer the object than are the earthly conceptions of heavenly things ; and whatever may be the endowments of soul and body, whatever increase or addition of powers may be needful to consummate such a relation, the relation must be such as shall perfectly satisfy the whole glorified nature of man.

Figurative as the language is which speaks of

the church as the wife of Christ, its meaning unfolds itself in a progress which approaches nearer to the literal. In this present time saints discern their Lord spiritually, but that longing which at times they feel for another presence of Him they love is not a longing for something which is less than they now have, or which is unworthily sensuous in its nature, but is rather a Divinely implanted desire, the gratification of which will mark the more spiritual and complete state of the glorified humanity. If the conception of a union with Christ which shall be something more than a union of spirit, seems to any to involve a lowering standard; the difficulty ought to be located where it belongs, in the earthliness and limitation of all present conception of that complete humanity in which there shall be no degradation of its spiritual elements by their contact with and recognition of those elements which are bodily.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE MILLENNIAL CHURCH WILL BE THE REIGN- ING CHURCH.

THE marriage of the church to Christ will be accompanied with royal gift and prerogative befitting her station and character. As the physical creation proclaims the unity of its plan, and as types of the highest forms of animal life are traceable far back amid the early forms of living creatures; so has God's ideal, which is to break upon the sight of the astonished universe in the exalted humanity of the church, been slowly unfolding itself through the ages. There has been a tendency in certain circles to leave that which is past and to find all the types of the future glory in the present order and form of churchly life; yet that which occupied the attention of God and manifested his power for many generations, must have a value which outlasts the years



of its manifestations. The Jewish nationality — the theocracy — the exaltation and religious superiority of the Jewish over the surrounding nations, the royal dignity which clothed the true Jewish idea, embodied types of the nobler creation which was to come. The quiet peace of Eden, the rugged strength of the Mosaic economy, the royal power of the throne of David, each brings its contribution to join the higher types of spirituality found in the Gospel dispensation, and all unite in the typical announcement of the church of the future.

#### THE IDEAL REACHED THROUGH PROGRESSIVE STEPS.

Humanity of the earlier periods was not ready to enter into, or at least was not ready to constitute the royal body. It must receive its first lessons in those earlier and darker ages ; and, not forgetting these, it must pass on through the refining processes of the Gospel dispensation, until from the testimony of blood and from the baptism of the Spirit, and from the tribulative and character-giving experiences of these times, humanity,

enlarged, instructed, sanctified, and brought together into glorious unity, at last ascends the throne and is seated by the side of the King Himself; and alike by those gifts which were received in the lowly walks of earth, and by those which come in the hour of its coronation, is it fitted to take and hold with the King of Kings the sceptre of the world.

#### JUDGMENTS UPON THE NATIONS AFTER THE TRANSLATION OF THE SAINTS.

Following the marriage of Christ and his church will come those disciplinary and retributive judgments with which He will visit the ungodly nations remaining upon the earth after the translation of the saints. Vials of wrath, long delayed, will be poured out in rapid succession. Calamities which have fallen upon portions of the world at different times will fall upon all nations. Men who have explained the evils of other times by theories which have excluded God, will be overwhelmed in mind and convinced of their folly. The instruments of wrath will be many and their use will be discriminating. The nature

of sin itself and the degrees of guilt in human actions will have fresh illumination by means of the fiery sentences which will issue forth from the Almighty.

REPENTANCE OF THE REMNANT OF THE  
NATIONS.

Multitudes will be slain, yet the destruction will not sweep away the inhabitants of earth as did the waters of the deluge; many will seek for death, and it shall flee from them; and before the days of this tribulation end the hearts of many will melt.

EARTH'S MILLENNIAL BLESSING.

Satan will be bound, and a tidal wave of repentance shall sweep over the desolated earth, the tears of which shall seem to go far toward washing away the traces of its great dishonor, and the thousand years of tranquillity and prosperity shall begin — years wherein the beatific visions of the prophets shall have fulfillment, and the wilderness bud and blossom as the rose. In this reign of righteousness preceded by judgments the Bride

of Christ will have part. The tables will be turned—the saints who have been judged will judge. She who has stood before kings and rulers of this world, to answer in tears and groans for crimes she never committed, shall be exalted above the heads of all her enemies, and the days of her mourning shall be ended.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE MILLENNIAL CHURCH WILL BE THE HEAVENLY CHURCH.

THE millennial church will be the heavenly church, first, in distinction from all ideas of millennial glory in this age, and from that glory which the remnants of the nations, left from the great tribulation, shall enjoy when the trial is past. This has been already considered.

And secondly, in distinction from the restricted and sometimes gross conceptions which so locate its seat and describe its functions as to take from it its heavenly character.

### THE CONNECTION OF THE GLORIFIED CHURCH WITH THE EARTH.

The glorified church will be in new and intimate connection with the earth, both during the

millennium and after the last great transformation shall have fitted the earth for its eternal state.

There are passages like Rev. v. 10, wherein the redeemed out of every kindred and nation introduce into the new song which they sing, this, — “That they have been made kings and priests unto God, and that they shall reign on the earth ;” and these words are understood by some to locate upon the earth the future and eternal abode of the church. But there is another passage which needs to be read in connection with these, — Rev. xxi. 3, — “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them.” In this is furnished a key to unlock the meaning of those words which connect the heavenly church with the earth. The scenes of Eden before the fall will be repeated, only the glory of that first paradise will be excelled by that of the second. God shall again walk with men on the earth in relations which these earliest scenes illustrate. Christ will reign over the saved nations which shall then, and forever, people this planet.

THE CHURCH DISTINCT FROM THE SAVED  
NATIONS.

His church not to be confounded with these saved nations, but his church as his Bride shall reign with Him. As Christ will be present upon the earth, so in their degree will his church be present, not indeed as inhabitants of earth having citizenship only here, but in a sense cosmopolitan, and in her priestly and governmental capacity. As the limits of this earth will put no restriction upon Christ, so they will not restrain the walks of his church. As heaven and the heaven of heavens with all its dependencies constitute the dominion of Christ, so will these be open to his royal Bride.

The church, from the beginning of the millennial state, will possess all the essential features of the eternal state, of which, so far as it is concerned, it will be the beginning.

## AFTER THE THOUSAND YEARS.

At the close of the thousand years it will, without change in itself, pass into the eternal,

changing toward the earth and toward the saved nations which dwell upon it only as the new and perfected earth shall by its final purification open the way for an enlarged connection and a closer and abiding intimacy.

In that day heaven and earth will be no longer sundered, as they now appear. The ladder which Jacob saw set up on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, will have more glorious realization in the communion of the heavenly church, with the nations of the new earth. John saw the New Jerusalem, the figurative representation of the heavenly church, coming down from God out of heaven. The nations were dwelling on the earth, but the church, as showing its superior and heavenly character, descends out of heaven. It belongs therefore both to heaven and to earth. The New Jerusalem, as representing the highest form of the manifestation of the glorified church to the nations on the earth, and as centering within itself the brightest display of the presence of the King Himself, will be the eternal realization of that which the temple upon Mount Moriah, with its priestly service and its Shekinah, symbolized.





## CHAPTER VI.

### OBJECTIONS.

IT is proper that certain objections which are urged against some of the views here presented, should be briefly considered.

### INTERPRETATION.

The interpretation which unfolds these views is generally spoken of as the literal. It certainly is more deserving of this name than are some other methods which are in use, and if it be simply understood as an appropriate name by which to distinguish it, as, for example, from what is termed the spiritualizing method, there would be no occasion of complaint; but it is unhappily the case that many confound the name thus given for purposes of convenience with an exact definition of the method itself. No one whose views would find acceptance with thoughtful minds thinks of

interpreting the Word of God literally in the most absolute sense of that term, and the same may be said of any other book, and of all language, spoken or written. The whole question is one of degrees, or more correctly of special applications. It is, no doubt, the candid opinion of some men that, unless certain principles of interpretation are accepted, all ideas of settled ground for faith must be given up. But the Word of God does not rest on so fine a point as some men locate. Its bearings are not so limited. It is able to stand after a multitude of supports which have been found for it have served their day. It is safe to say that interpretation in the hands of men has not yet reached the place where it can be reckoned as an exact science. The Bible is restive under these formulas which men make for it. Some of them are no doubt very ingenious, so much so, that it may seem a wonder that the Word of God does not readily fall in with them, yet just this it has most resolutely refused to do.

## THE BIBLE ITS OWN INTERPRETER.

It is quite probable that no system or set of rules will ever be found which will wholly meet the supposed necessity, for the Bible itself seems not to acknowledge the necessity of an unvarying rule. It is its own rule. It takes the whole of the Bible to interpret its several parts. It is claimed by the believers in the pre-millennial advent of Christ that the facts in respect to prophecy which has been already fulfilled, and especially that portion which relates the first coming of Christ, most decidedly favor the literal rather than the spiritualizing method with those Scriptures which relate to his second coming.

## SUPPOSED INADEQUACY OF RESULTS.

Again, it is said that if wickedness continues to increase in the world, as this age draws to its close, then the present dispensation ends without adequate results. But who is to determine what are adequate results? It is said that the preparations which have been made, the means of grace which have been brought into use, are upon too grand a

scale and of too costly a nature to have so short a trial, and to be laid aside when so little has been accomplished. The answer is that these means of grace are neither to be dishonored or laid aside. All the riches of grace and the power of the cross will pass on into the age that succeeds this. These preparations, which all admit have been made upon a grand scale, were never intended to expend their full force and accomplish their greatest results in this age.

#### TRUTH AND LOVE *versus* FORCE.

Again, it is affirmed that the doctrine presented is a confession that truth and love are weak, not able to overcome the evil that is in the world, and hence must give place to force; that it represents God as under the necessity of doing by sheer Almightyness what He could not do by grace. The men who make this objection, if they rely much upon it, ought for the sake of consistency to go further. The Gospel dispensation has now covered more than eighteen centuries, during which time the truth and love of God have been offered to unnumbered multitudes by a noble com-

pany of self-sacrificing men. Have all these accepted grace? Will it be found in the last day that the sweet forces of truth and love have conquered all who have been in array against God? If this is not the case, if, as these men themselves believe, there will be at the judgment a company of men upon whom the Gospel has had no effect except to harden them, and who stand at the bar of God only because of a call which they could not disobey, shall it be said that because these men are unsaved the Gospel has been by so much a failure? No more can it be said that truth and love have failed, when the means and methods by which God has offered grace to men during this age, and which shall have accomplished that to which they were appointed, shall in due time give place to another dispensation.

#### HARMONY OF THE DIVINE FORCES.

Would it not be well to inquire whether the relation of what is spoken of as the sheer force or Almightyness of God to his truth and love, is fully understood by those who thus judge? There are views of God's love held in this world which

evangelical Christians disavow as neither doing honor to the character of God nor yet to the minds which hold them.

Revelation nowhere represents God as entering into and carrying on the work of redemption with truth and love as the only powers employed. He would abdicate his throne were He to do this. All the forces and movements of God's Almightyness do but illuminate his truth and illustrate his love. His perfectness is such that He never carries on any movement by the exercise of a part of his nature at the expense of some other part. God never will do anything in redemption by the sheer force of which these persons speak. He never has done anything by a love which denies a place to force. The past is full of examples showing how God uses both judgment and mercy. When God offers to men the Gospel, and patiently waits through centuries of abuse till an appointed time, and then by a sudden change and by rapidly succeeding judgments in which many souls are hurled into perdition, brings the remnant of the world to its senses and introduces a more glorious state, who shall say that there has been

any reproachful failure, or that any qualities in the Divine nature have suffered an eclipse?

#### THE CHARGE OF MATERIALISM.

It is said that these views tend toward a gross materialism. That some minds tend toward such gross conceptions is evident, but these doctrines ought not to be held responsible for such facts any more than the doctrine of spiritual things common to all evangelical Christians should be held responsible for the transcendentalism into which some individuals pass.

#### THE SUPPOSED TENDENCY TO LESSEN MISSION-ARY ZEAL.

Another and perhaps the gravest charge which is made against millenarian views is, that they are destructive of missionary zeal. What of ardor there may be sustained by a reliance upon human enterprise and activity, forgetful largely of the Divine power, would very likely suffer abatement from the reception of these views. That kind of enthusiasm which depends upon the excitements of present success, upon vivid pictures of wonder-

ful scenes, which lives where there is abundance of sight, but dies under the trials of the walk by faith, — that enthusiasm would be lessened.

#### THE TRUE ZEAL.

But the call of the Gospel sends men to do a work for God without regard to the measure of present results, and that zeal which is better for the service of Christ and the good of the world finds its nourishment in God Himself. If it could be shown by revelation and the progress of events that the world was being rapidly converted, and that the power of wickedness would soon give way, the fact would be an encouragement to activity, but when revelation has to have this notion interpreted into it, and when men have to be constantly accounting for the unhappy facts which surround them, then, even upon natural grounds, it may be confidently affirmed that the view of things which leads the servants of God to expect the opposition of a world resisting to the bitter end, are the views calculated to sustain the deeper and truer missionary zeal. A true fidelity asks only to know what is the nature of the ex-



pected service. Courageous sons of the cross ask only to have set before them the field as it is; if there are difficulties, they prefer to know them; if the conflict lasts till the end, they can the more steadily hold their place and do their work in the face of trials foreseen, than can those who go forth with glowing anticipations of a success which is to be a matter of sight, but which is constantly clouded by disappointment and a hope deferred which maketh the heart sick.

#### REASON OF THE DELAY.

Finally, if it be asked why the protracted warfare of the church, and the labors and pains of evangelistic service, if, after all, God is to interpose with the force of his red right arm? why not the force sooner, and these tribulations cut short? — the reply is, because God's plan spans wider spaces than many conceive, and covers a wider field than that embraced in the salvation of any number of men from pains and penalties, either in this age or those which are to come. The history of God's unfolding purposes in connection with the long, dark period through which

the race has existed, cannot spare a single chapter.

As God has been sending forth the church to preach the Gospel for a testimony to the nations, so He, by this and by other and unseen operations, has been preparing a testimony which shall be full and powerful, and shall last forever. The darkness as well as the light, the blasphemy as well as the praise, the refusal of grace by some and its acceptance by others, shall all have place in that consummation in which the slow movement of the ages ends at length.

#### A GREAT LESSON.

There were great lessons to be taught by God and learned by men, — lessons upon those seemingly well known but really imperfectly understood subjects of God and government — justice and love, sin and holiness. Before God is done with this world He will have unfolded and impressed these truths so that the lesson will not need to be retaught. Nay, more, though it may be a speculation, yet one whose course agrees with the pointing of certain words in revelation: When

God shall have finished the teaching of earth and time, it may be that not only the multiplying generations of the new earth but also the unnumbered races of other worlds, created and to be created, which people or may hereafter people those heavenly bodies which surround us in space, shall have before them the same lesson, written alike in the dark-lettered records of sin and death, in the blood-red symbols of the cross, and in the grandly illuminated history of the church, traced along all those ways which have led through the wilderness to her place of transcendent dignity as the chaste and glorified Bride of Christ. In this God shall make such an exhibit of his own nature and of the nature of sin as shall for evermore be the prevention of rebellion and the security of liberty to all the nations through their intelligent choice of obedience and holiness. *One history of wickedness and one hell will be enough for all worlds while eternal ages roll.* Not a cloud, therefore, not an hour of darkness, not a pang of remorse, not a wail of sorrow of all that has been on earth, or of all that shall be in hell, could be spared from the great total of this testimony of

the ages. And with a clear understanding of that relation which she sustains to her Lord, and that work in which she is permitted to bear so honorable a part, and of that glory which gathers its brightness from all the events of earth and from out of the wreck of time, the church may for a little while be well content with her present lot, and in the patience of hope may gladly consent to all the tribulations of earth through which she is making her pilgrimage to reach the kingdom and the throne.

The human and earthly hope of a triumph in which — guard it ever so well — there is constant danger of too much confidence in the flesh and of too little praise to God, may well be thrown aside in favor of the right royal vision which through the Word of God breaks upon the spiritual sight, from out those heavens where even now the rapt soul may almost see the hastening movements which herald the near approach of the returning Lord, and the coming of that day in which the mystery of God shall be finished, and the church of the first-born, delivered from the last tribulation, exalted to the queenly place, head of all

racés and nations, shall manifest unto principalities and powers in heavenly places, the unsearchable riches and manifold wisdom of God according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Reader, what is your hope? Are you assured of a glorious part in the inheritance of the saints in light?

The gift of God is eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ. Grace for these days of time and glory for the ages to come are received not by works but by faith. Turn from this evil world. Believe and be ready. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.





THE  
MILLENNIAL CHURCH.

BY  
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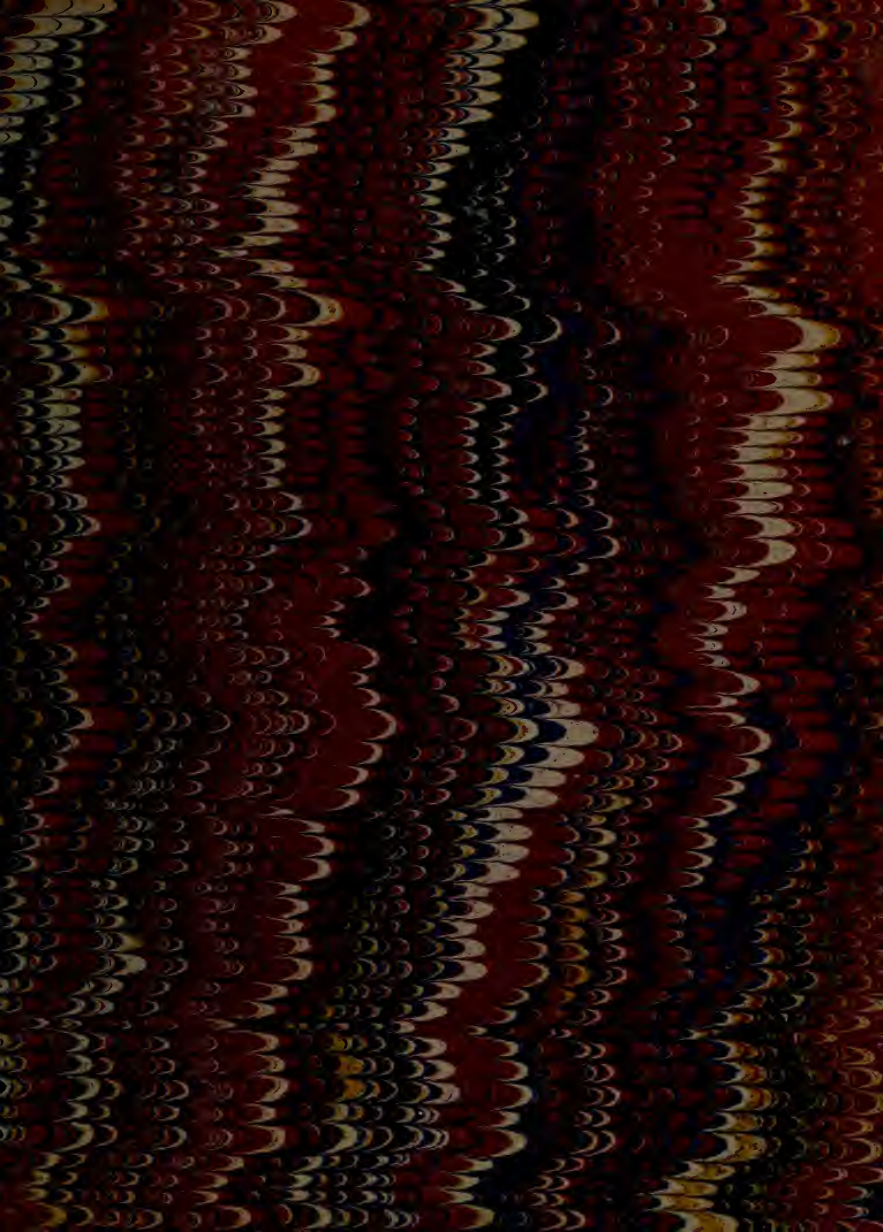
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